

Call center moves into downtown Seattle

ACCESS call center services provided by Laidlaw Transit Services are moving to new facilities in downtown Seattle. In September, 50 staff will move into the newly renovated second floor of the Exchange Building at Second Avenue and Marion Street. State-of-the-art telephone and computer systems, as well as an on-site computer lab for training, are set and ready for action.

This secure facility will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Eventually, all reservations, scheduling, dispatching and customer services for ACCESS Transportation will be housed here.

The Metro Accessible Services offices are in the Exchange Building as well. Better physical access to call center operations by contract management will improve service delivery and customer satisfaction.



Metro fares increased July 1.

The ACCESS cash fare is now 75 cents, while the ACCESS monthly pass is \$13.50. If you buy a Regional Reduced Fare monthly fare sticker for \$5.50, you will have paid 25 cents toward your ACCESS cash fare. Please remember that you need to pay a fare each time you enter an ACCESS vehicle. You also need to show your ACCESS ADA identification card whenever you get on the van.

All fare media can be purchased in person at either of two Metro Customer Services offices in downtown Seattle:

- King Street Center, 201 S. Jackson St., Seattle
- Westlake Metro Tunnel Station at Third Avenue and Pine Street.

You can buy reduced fare monthly stickers at any Bartell Drug Store. You can also order any fare media by phone at 206-624-PASS (voice) or 206-684-2029 (TTY users only). Or try Metro Online at <http://transit.metrokc.gov/> on the Web. For purchases of monthly fare media, Metro can also set up an automatic purchase program, by phone, mail or online.



Vashon Island adds 12 hours of Saturday service on Sept. 29, 2001

Metro's fall service change includes adding Saturday ACCESS service for Vashon Islanders between 7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

ACCESS Transportation service hours will increase in other areas at the same time. Check with your call center for details. The ACCESS service area remains the same at this time.



Come to a Meeting

Please plan to attend a meeting in September and learn about new programs, policies and providers for ACCESS Transportation services.

- Do you ever ride a Metro bus?
- What keeps you from riding a Metro bus?

■ What can Metro do to get more people with disabilities and seniors onto the regular bus?

If you have questions about the meetings, need a sign-language interpreter or want to request meeting materials in large print or braille, please contact Accessible Services at least two weeks before the meeting: 206-689-3113 (voice), 206-689-3116 (TTY) or [accessible.services@ metrokc.gov](mailto:accessible.services@metrokc.gov).

Monday, Sept. 24, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Federal Way Regional Library
34200 First Way S., Room 2, Federal Way
(If you are using transit, take Metro Route 903.)

Monday, Sept. 24, 6:30-8 p.m.

Issaquah Public Library
10 W. Sunset Way, Issaquah
(If you are using transit, take Metro route 215.)

Tuesday, Sept. 25, from 2-3:30 p.m.

Wallingford Public Library/
Fremont Public Association
1501 N. 45th St., Seattle
(If you are using transit, take Metro routes 16 or 44.)

Tuesday, Sept. 25, from 6:30-8 p.m.

Center Park
2121 26th Ave S., Seattle
(If you are using transit, take Metro routes 4, 7, 8, 9, 42 or 48.)



New cancellation policies for Nov. 1, 2001

Working with the King County Accessible Services Advisory Committee, Metro staff updated policies for cancellations of scheduled trips and late cancellations.

Subscription trips

You can schedule a subscription trip if you go from the same origin to the same destination at the same time on one or more days a week. Subscription trips account for 43 percent of scheduled rides, or about 430,000 each year.

More than one in five subscription rides are canceled. That trend means that on each day more than 150 subscription trips were scheduled and not used, unnecessarily tying up ACCESS capacity.

With the new cancellation policy, Metro hopes to reduce the number of wasted trips scheduled by riders who cancel 50 percent or more of the time — and provide the seats for other riders.

As many as 300 of the riders who hold subscription trips cancel more than 50 percent of their trips each month. Some riders may hold subscription trips they do not need.

The revised policy states that riders who cancel 50 percent or more of subscription trips in a month are at risk of losing subscription trip status and may have to request rides one at a time.

The first step in reclaiming the unused subscription trips was to identify the problem and propose a solution. The problem — unnecessary holds on times and rides —

blocks access to trips for other riders. The intended goal is making the most rides available for all riders to request and use.

ACCESS Transportation staff will be contacting you if you are a rider who has a history of canceling 50 percent or more of their subscription trips, by letter or phone. We can then discuss the high cancellation rate, list the causes and find possible solutions.

In November, the call center's customer service staff will fully implement the policy and begin to notify you if you have canceled more than 50 percent of your subscription trips in 30 days. After a warning, your subscription trips and trip cancellations are monitored for another month.

If you continue to cancel 50 percent or more of subscription trips, you will get a notice of subscription trip service cancellation, effective in 14 days. After that, you can continue to request trips as needed and may even request a new subscription trip.

If you get a call or letter about frequent subscription trip cancellations, please consider your needs. See if your needs have changed and consider whether you still need a subscription trip.

At any time, you may call the Customer Service Office for information or review. Exceptions to the policy may be made at the discretion of customer service staff.

Late cancels equal no-shows

The second policy change affects late cancellation of service. If you cancel a trip after 5 p.m. the day before a trip, ACCESS Transportation schedulers don't have time to

use that time or space with other riders. By getting all cancellations before 5 p.m. the day before, call center staff can review schedules for the next day and revise them to improve on-time performance and trip length.

Beginning Nov. 1, when you cancel a trip after 5 p.m. the day immediately before the trip, that cancellation will be treated as a “no show.” After six “no-shows” in a 30-day period, you can be suspended from ACCESS Transportation services for one week or longer. You will receive a written notice of each trip that is treated as a “no-show.”

If you disagree with your notice, you may contact the Customer Service Office at the call center. Of course, if you have an emergency arise overnight such as sudden illness, we still want to know that you are not going to use the trip.

If you are scheduling transfer trips, either within King County or to or from an adjacent county, the policy is a little different. Because the schedule for your transfer trip cannot be confirmed until after 5 p.m. the day before, the policy will apply only if you cancel **after** you have agreed to a confirmed trip. Then, the cancellation will be treated as a no-show.

Help us serve more people

Up to 24 percent of all trips scheduled are not taken because of cancellations or no-shows, with half of the cancellations happening within two hours of the trip. Please help make the system more efficient and allow more trips to be scheduled. Re-evaluate whether or not you need subscription service, and cancel unwanted trips as soon as you can.



Re-certification process begins

Accessible Services has begun the process of re-certifying everyone now registered for King County Metro's ADA Paratransit Program. Regulations in the Americans with Disability Act suggest that re-certification be done every three years.

We will contact the 26,000 people registered for ADA Paratransit at Metro during the next three years. Please note that there will be no change in your service unless re-certification leads to a change in your eligibility determination.

When you get a re-certification packet from Accessible Services, please read it carefully and follow the directions. Once King County Metro has asked you to re-certify, you must do so or risk losing Access Transportation services altogether.

Basic ADA Paratransit service is curb-to-curb, with driver assistance on and off the vehicle. Some Access riders, however, may need to bring a personal care attendant when they travel, or they may require a higher level of service than curb-to-curb. As part of re-certification, all customers will be asked to verify whether they need door-to-door or hand-to-hand service, or a personal care attendant.

Re-certification information becomes part of each rider's record and is used for scheduling and dispatching appropriate trips.

If you believe your paratransit service needs have changed, you may ask to be re-certified at any time. Please contact

Accessible Services at 206-689-3113 (voice) or 206-689-3116 (TTY users only) during business hours.



Riders confirm or cancel trips with Rideline

On April 14, ACCESS riders in area code 206 began using ACCESS Rideline, an automated trip confirmation and cancellation telephone line that's available around the clock. The 425 and 253 area codes will have this service before 2002.

ACCESS riders can use their push-button phone to confirm or cancel trips or to hear recorded information about ACCESS Transportation service. Callers can reach a staff person during business hours from any point in the menu, if they desire. Rideline users can adjust the system's speed and volume to suit their own needs.

Rider Quinton Thompson said, "I like the accuracy, precision and convenience of the new Rideline." Other riders appreciate the ability to call Rideline at times when the call center isn't open, and that they can confirm or cancel their rides much faster than before.

Eventually, callers will be able to use ACCESS Rideline to automatically book trips they take regularly. In the future, the system will be able to call customers to notify them a few minutes before their ACCESS van's arrival or to notify them of service cancellations caused by adverse weather conditions.



Access Transportation trip data

January through March 2001

- Number of rides: 242,676
- Safety: 2.3 accidents per 100,000 miles
- On-time trip delivery: 92.45%
- Number of calls taken: 184,153
- Percentage of calls handled within 3 minutes: 92%
- Trips with no-shows or cancellations: 76,689
(24% of scheduled trips)
- Percentage of trip requests met: 98.6%

Rider feedback about Access Transportation service*

- Amount of service available: 95% satisfied
- Safety: 99% satisfied
- On-time performance: 93% satisfied
- Driver's helpfulness: 96% satisfied
- Call taker accuracy: 98% satisfied
- Service is a good value for what you pay: 99% satisfied

* From a survey of 250 riders for January through March 2001



25 compete in Paratransit Rodeo

King County Metro Accessible Services hosts a Paratransit Rodeo every year. Competition consists of driving an ACCESS van through a timed obstacle course and demonstrating various maneuvers that represent the

actions drivers must take while working. This event tests driving skills and promotes safety awareness for drivers and road supervisors.

On July 14, 25 participants and 50 volunteers shared in the fun. The winners attended the Washington State Paratransit Rodeo in King County on Aug. 12.

Pictured here are the King County Metro Paratransit winners: Orvetta Seward, first place; Lottie Dyer, second place; and Evelyn Maldonado, third place. Toliy Barbin won the Mavericks Category for new drivers, and Jessie Brandt took the prize for road supervisors.

Orvetta Seward went on to place fourth in the Washington State Rodeo. She will compete in the National Rodeo in Austin, Texas, later this year.

For more information and to give feedback

King County Metro's Accessible Services:

■ Phone: 206-689-3113

■ TTY users only: 206-689-3116

■ E-mail: accessible.services@metrokc.gov

■ Web site: <http://transit.metrokc.gov/accessible/access.html>

■ Fax: 206-263-3101

Mail: King County Metro Accessible Services
EXC-TR-1240
821 Second Ave., Suite 10
Seattle, WA 98104-1598

All ACCESS Transportation printed materials (including this newsletter) are available in braille, on audio tape cassette, in large print and on computer diskette. Call 206-689-3113 (voice) or 206-689-3116 (TTY).

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